

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOMBAY 01018 221553Z

46

ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 L-03 NEA-10 IO-13 /033 W

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O R 221308Z APR 76

FM AMCONSUL BOMBAY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6359

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOMBAY 1018

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH ND

SUBJ: TARAPUR EXPORT LICENSE

REF: STATE 97106

1. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM IAEC CHAIRMAN SETHNA
REPLYING SERIATIM TO POINTS RAISED IN PARA 1 OF REFTEL.
QUOTE. PLEASE REFER TO YOUR LETTER OF 22ND APRIL 1976. THE
INFORMATION ASKED FOR BY YOU IS BASED ON EXTRAPOLATION OF THE
DATA WHICH WE HAVE REGARDING THE OPERATION OF THE CONVERSION
PLANT, BECAUSE WE HAVE NEVER OPERATED THE PLANT ENTIRELY ON
SCRAP. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT THE CAPACITY OF TH
PWANT TO HANDLE SCRAP IS APPROXIMATELY 1/5TH OF THE TOTAL CAPACITY.
JPLY TO QUERY (A): IF NO ADDITIONAL FRESH UF6 IS AVAILABLE WE
WILL BE RUNNING THE PLANT ENTIRELY ON SCRAP FROM THE FIRST WEEK
OF SEPTEMBER 1976. PRESENT INDIACTIONS ARE THAT THE EARLIEST
THE FIRST BATCH OF FUEL BUNDWES MANUFACTURED FROM SCRAP,
AVAILABLE FOR DESPATCH TO THE TARAPUR STATION, WOULD BE SOME-
TIME END-AUGU ZSEARLY SEPTEMBER 1977.
REPLY TO QUERY (B): RATE OF BUNDLE PRODUCTION WOULD BE RELATED TO
THE RATE OF PRODUCTION OF POWDER WHICH WOULD DROP TO A FIFTH OF
THE NORMAL, THAT IS, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO PRODICT BETWEEN 25 AND
30 FUEL BUNDLES PER ANNUM.
REPLY TO QUERY (C): STARTING WUTH A CLEAN PLANT IT WOULD TAKE
APPROXIMATELY FINE MONTHS TO GET BACK TO NORMAL PRODUCTION RATE
OF ASSEMBLED FUEL BUNDLES ONCE A FRESH FEED IN THE REQUIRED
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PAGE 02 BOMBAY 01018 221553Z

QUANTITY AND ENRICHMENT IS AVAILABLE AT NFC. THIS ASSUMES THAT WE

RECEIVE ADVANCE INTIMATION ABOUT SHIPMENT DURING WHICH TIME THE PLANT COULD BE CLEANED OUT TO RECEIVE FRESH HEXA-FLUORIDE. THIS WOULD TAKE A MINIMUM OF TWENTY DAYS OR UPTO SIX WEEKS. THE LONGER PERIOD IS REQUIRED IF THERE IS DIS BLVED SCRAP IN OOE CONVERSION PLANT.

YOURS SINCERELY, (SIGNED) H.N.SETHNA. UNQUOTE.

2. SETHNA MENTIONED THAT HE WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH KRATZER IN PROPOSED PHONCON POSSIBLITY OF SENDING AN IAEC EXPERT TO AMERICA TO ASSIST IN INTERPRETATION OF DATA IAEC HAS BEEN PROVIDING. MAIN OBSTACLES WHICH SETHNA SEES ARE:

A. INCREASING VISIBILITY OF INDIAN CONCERN WHICH COULD GENERATE INDESIRABLE PUBLICITY, AND

B. NEED TO INSURE THAT GOI DOES NOT BECOME FORMALLY INVOLVED IN PROCEEDING BEFORE NRC EVEN THOUGH THEIR EXPERT WOULD BE HELPING WITH PRESENTATION OF DATA. SETHNA IS NOT INCLINED TO SEND ANYONE FROM NFC COMPLEX TO WASHINGTON BECAUFE HE FEELS THAT THEY WOULD BE UNABLE TO COPE WITH BROADER ASPECTS AS THIS PROBLEM AND THROUGH EXCESSIVE EMPHASIS ON DETAILS OF FUEL PRODUCTION PROCESS WOULD BE LIKELY TO FURTHER CONFUSE SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES. HE IS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY J.C.SHAH COULD BE TRULY ENFECTIVE. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT SHAH AND SETHNA NOW PERSONALLY HAVE A MUCH BETTER GRASP OF DETAILS OF PRODUCTION PROCESS BUT THEY ARE STILL UNABLE TO PUT IN LANGUAGE THAT I CAN UNDERSTAND REPLIES TO MANY OF THE BASIC QUESTIONS THAT ARE AT ROTT OF OUR PROBLEMS IN PRESENTING THEIRSCASE TO NRC. I RECOMMEND THAT DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER OEAR IN MIND PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN FROM SETHNA'S INSISTENCE ON HAVING HIMSELF AND J.C.SHAH HANDLE ALL OF THESE INQUIRIES PERSONALLY ALTHOUGH BOTH OF THEM HAVE IN SETHNA'S OWN WORDS "GOTTEN FIGURES MUDDLED" AS THEY PROGRESSIVELY DEVELOPED A FIRMER GRASP OF PRODUCTION PROCESS AT NFC. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO SUGGEST THAT ONE OF IAEC HEADQUARTERS TECHNICIANS IN BOMBAY BUT OF LOWER LEVEL THAN J.K.SHAH WOKLD BE A BETTER CHOICE FOR THIS MISSION. MY OWN EXPERIENCE IN THAT R.VERMA, WHO HAS BEEN RECENTLY EXCLUDED FROM DISCUSSION, WOULD BE MORE USEFUW IN WASHINGTON THAN SHAH, WHILE KRATZER CANNBT MENTION VERMA BY NAVME, HE COULD STRESS NEED FOR EXPERTISE, AND SUGGEST POSSIBLITY OF SOMEONE OF LOWER PROFILE THAN SHAH WHO ISSKHAIRMAN OF ATOMIC POWER AUTHORITY.

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PAGE 03 BOMBAY 01018 221553Z

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